CLAIMS

1. A server for retaining and dispensing beverages, the server comprising:

a housing;

a reservoir positioned in the housing for retaining a beverage;

a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to a beverage retained in the reservoir;

a controller coupled to the heater for controlling operation of the heater; whereby the heater is operated before dispensing beverage to the reservoir for preheating the reservoir before dispensing of beverage therein.

2. The server of claim 1 further comprising the server in combination with a beverage brewer.

3. The server of claim 1 further comprising the server in combination with a dispensing station.

4. The server of claim 1 further comprising a space defined between at least a portion of an inside surface of the housing and at least a portion of an outside surface of the reservoir, the space providing a thermal barrier between the outside of the reservoir and an outside of the housing.

5. The server of claim 4 further comprising insulating material being positioned in the space defined between at least a portion of an inside surface of the housing and at least a portion of an outside surface of the reservoir to provide a thermal barrier between the outside of the reservoir and an outside of the housing.

6. A method of preheating a beverage server, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a server with a reservoir for retaining a beverage;

providing a passage in the server communicating with the reservoir;

providing a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to the reservoir;

providing a controller coupled to the heater for controlling the heating of the reservoir;

preheating the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir; and

dispensing beverage into the preheated reservoir.

7. A method of preheating a beverage server to prevent a decrease in the temperature of a beverage dispensed therein, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a server with a reservoir for retaining a beverage;

providing a passage in the server communicating with the reservoir;

providing a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to the reservoir;

providing a controller coupled to the heater for controlling the heating of the reservoir;

activating the heater for transferring energy to the reservoir to heat the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir to prevent a decrease in the temperature of beverage dispensed into the reservoir; and

dispensing beverage into the reservoir of the preheated server.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of adding energy to the reservoir prior to dispensing beverage into the reservoir and continuing to add energy to the reservoir after the start of dispensing beverage to the reservoir.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of terminating the heating of the reservoir after a predetermined time.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of terminating the heating of the reservoir after a predetermined time and activating the heater after a second period of time.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the steps of repeatedly terminating the heating of the reservoir after a predetermined time and activating the heater after a second period of time for a predetermined number of terminating and activating cycles.

12. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of terminating the heating of the reservoir after achieving a temperature within a predetermined temperature range.

13. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of adding energy to at least one of the reservoir and the air in the reservoir prior to dispensing beverage into the reservoir.

14. The method of claim 7 further comprising the steps of:

providing a heating coil positioned on an outside surface of the reservoir;

heating the corresponding surface of the reservoir; and

transferring heat to the reservoir for controllably preheating the reservoir and for controllably heating a beverage to be dispensed therein.

15. A method of reducing the transfer of heat from a beverage to a server into which the beverage is dispensed, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a server with a reservoir for retaining a beverage;

providing a passage in the server communicating with the reservoir;

providing a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to the reservoir;

providing a controller coupled to the heater for controlling the heating of the reservoir;

activating the heater for providing energy to the reservoir to heat the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir to prevent a decrease in the temperature of beverage dispensed into the reservoir;

preheating the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir; and

dispensing beverage into the heated reservoir.

16. A server in combination with a beverage brewer comprising:

a beverage brewer for combining heated water with a beverage brewing substance for producing a brewed beverage therefrom;

a server housing;

a server reservoir positioned in the server housing for retaining a beverage;

a server heater carried on the server and operatively associated with the server reservoir for transferring energy from the server heater to a beverage retained in the server reservoir;

a controller coupled to at least one of the beverage brewer the server heater for controlling operation of the server heater; whereby the server heater is operated before dispensing beverage to the server reservoir for preheating the server reservoir before dispensing of beverage therein.

17. A server in combination with a dispensing station comprising:

a server housing;

a server reservoir positioned in the server housing for retaining a beverage;

a server heater carried on the server and operatively associated with the server reservoir for transferring energy from the server heater to a beverage retained in the server reservoir;

a dispensing station for receiving at least one server thereon;

a controller coupled to at least one of the dispensing station and the server heater for controlling operation of the server heater; whereby the server heater is operated before dispensing beverage to the server reservoir for preheating the server reservoir before dispensing of beverage therein.

18. A method of maintaining the freshness of beverage retained in a server, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a server with a reservoir for retaining a beverage;

providing a passage in the server communicating with the reservoir;

providing a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to the reservoir;

providing a controller coupled to the heater for controlling the heating of the reservoir;

activating the heater for providing energy to the reservoir to heat the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir to prevent a decrease in the temperature of beverage dispensed into the reservoir;

preheating the reservoir before dispensing beverage to the reservoir;

dispensing beverage into the heated reservoir; and

terminating the heating of the reservoir after at least one of a predetermined time and achieving a temperature within a predetermined temperature range.

19. A method of brewing a beverage comprising:

providing a beverage brewer for combining heated water with a beverage brewing substance for producing a brewed beverage;

providing a server with a reservoir for retaining a beverage;

providing a passage in the server communicating with the reservoir;

providing a heater operatively associated with the server for transferring energy from the heater to the reservoir;

providing a controller coupled to the heater for controlling the heating of the reservoir;

positioning the server in position relative to the beverage brewer for receiving a beverage produced by the beverage brewer;

initiating a brewing cycle;

activating the heater for preheating the server;

terminating operation of the heater after at least one of a predetermined time and achieving a temperature within a predetermined temperature range; and

dispensing beverage from the brewer into the reservoir of the preheated server through the passage communicating with the reservoir.